

WHAT'S AHEAD

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The Board of Podiatric Medicine (BPM) is the unit of the Medical Board of California (MBC), Department of Consumer Affairs, which administers licensing of DPMs under the State Medical Practice Act.

Sacramento--At BPM's last meeting, noted architect Raymond K. Cheng, A.I.A. was elected President for 2005 and podiatric leader James R. LaRose, DPM was elected Vice President. Both have already contributed greatly to BPM and the Board will certainly be in good hands as we enter another challenging year of opportunity. Here are some of the things just ahead:

December 11 Exam in San Francisco

Fifty candidates are registered to take the oral exam qualifying them for the new, AB 932 scope of practice already authorized for post-1983 licensees and those ankle-licensed since then. This is a pathway for veteran practitioners who did not pursue ankle privileges but do perform amputations or want to assist MDs as licensed surgeons or do ankles now.

BPM anticipates scheduling another exam in 2005 and others as necessary thereafter. The exam committee structured the test to include three questions: one forefoot, one rearfoot and one medical emergency. Candidates question the examiners as they would a patient to elicit history & physical information needed to make a proper diagnosis and present an appropriate treatment plan.

Unlike specialty certification boards like ABPS, licensing boards have been mandated by California law enacted in the 1990s to test only for a minimum threshold level of entry-level competence. This is a *licensing* test.

January 28 BPM Meeting in Sacramento

The Board has scheduled a meeting for early 2005 but will then clear its decks to prepare the quadrennial Sunset Review Report. This is a big project but also an opportunity to update statutes and build Legislative support. An August 26 teleconference is planned to approve the report, with regular Board meetings slated for September 30 in San Francisco and December 2 in Sacramento. The latter may coincide with initial Legislative sunset hearings.

Leading off the January 28 meeting will be dialogue with Brenda Klutz, the Deputy Director of the Department of Health Services (DHS) for Licensing and Certification. Hopefully, the current H&P exam issue initiated by her medical consultants during hospital visits will be resolved by then. That is under review at the San Francisco regional office of USDHHS, under whose delegation the state DHS site visits are conducted. The federal regulators in Washington, D.C. insist that the long-awaited Medicare conditions of

participation amendments fixing this as we wish will be finalized and effective by early 2005 at the latest.

To monitor the status of these regulations, please see:

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/physicians/prt/issues.asp#podiatrists>

If the Governor endorses the California Performance Review (CPR) recommendations to transfer health licensing boards from the Department of Consumer Affairs to DHS, that could be discussed with Ms. Klutz as well. But the word from one trusted insider seems to reflect the views of most knowledgeable Hill watchers: "I do not think shifting the boards to Health Services will have much support anywhere."

Medical Board Monitor

Also at the January 28 BPM Board Meeting will be Julie D'Angelo Fellmeth, JD of the Center for Public Interest Law (University of San Diego Law School). She was appointed to serve as the statutorily created Medical Board Monitor. Her just released, first report will be the topic:

http://www.cpil.org/MBC_Initial_Report.htm

Though 370 pages, it has an Executive Summary and will be reviewed here in the next issue. The focus is on Medical Board enforcement, and at least some of the recommendations will impact BPM. We work under the same laws and utilize (and pay for) many Medical Board staff services including complaint intake and investigation.

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